

Message Text

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SUBJ: MONTREAL REACTION TO AIR STRIKE SETTLEMENT

REF: MONTREAL 0855

1. THE ISSUE OF BILINGUALISM IN AIR COMMUNICATIONS CONTINUED TO RATE FRONT PAGE NEWS COVERAGE IN THE JULY 3 WEEKEND EDITIONS OF MAJOR MONTREAL DAILIES AND PRACTICALLY ALL CARRIED LEAD EDITORIALS ON THE SUBJECT. THE FOLLOWING SUMMARIZES EDITORIAL COMMENT ON THAT DATE.

2. FOR LA JOUR, CANADA IS EXPERIENCING ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS CRISES OF ITS HISTORY. THE STRIKE OF ANGLOPHONE AIR CONTROLLERS AND PILOTS, THE CONDITIONS OF THEIR RETURN TO WORK AND THE ABDICATION OF THE TRUDEAU GOVERNMENT ON A MAJOR POLITICAL ISSUE ARE NOT JUST OTHER EVENTS IN CANADIAN LIFE. THEY GO TO THE VERY HEART OF THE COUNTRY'S EXISTENCE. WHEN TRUDEAU, PELLETIER AND MARCHAND ENTERED POLITICS SOME TEN YEARS AGO, THEY DID SO TO DEMONSTRATE THAT A BILINGUAL CANADA COULD EXIST AND THAT INDEPENDENCE FOR QUEBEC WAS NOT THE ONLY SOLUTION. NOW IT IS CLEAR THEY HAVE FAILED. BUT THE FAILURE OF THE FEDERAL BILINGUALISM POLICY CAN ONLY CAUSE

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MINOR REJOICING IN QUEBEC SEPARATIST RANKS. FOR, WHILE IT

SHOWS THEY WERE RIGHT, IT LEAVES THEM SAD AT THE SIGHT OF THE FAILURE OF THEIR FELLOW FRANCOPHONES ON THE FEDERAL SCENE. WE MUST BE RESPECTFUL TOWARD THOSE WHO ARE EVALUATING THEIR FEELINGS ABOUT FEDERATION AND ARE GETTING READY TO REPATRIATE TO QUEBEC THE EFFORTS THEY HAVE MADE ELSEWHERE ON BEHALF OF A LOST CAUSE.

3. CLAUDE RYAN, IN LA DEVOIR, WROTE THAT WHILE MANY MAY CONCLUDE THAT THE AIR COMMUNICATIONS CRISIS MEANS THE FAILURE OF THE TRUDEAU EXPERIENCE AND THE END OF FRENCH POWER, IT DOES NOT. TRUDEAU AND HIS COLLEAGUES ENTERED POLITICS TO SHOW THAT FRANCOPHONES COULD ASSUME POWER AND TO BRING FRANCOPHONES INTO THE TOP LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, AND THEY SUCCEEDED. THERE IS NO DOUBT BUT THAT TRUDEAU HAS BEEN THE EFFECTIVE HEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND HE HAS PLACED FRANCOPHONES IN ALL IMPORTANT FEDERAL JOBS EXCEPT THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE. AS FOR BILINGUALISM, HE DID NOT SUCCEED IN HAVING IT ACCEPTED BY ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, BUT HE DID INTRODUCE IT IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

4. ROGER LEMELIN, PRESIDENT AND EDITOR IN CHIEF OF LA PRESSE, ADOPTED A UNIQUE POSITION. FOR HIM, THE CRISIS OVER BILINGUALISM IN AIR COMMUNICATIONS SEEMS TOO EXAGGERATED, TOO ARTIFICIAL AND PROBABLY PLANNED. THE CRISIS WILL DO MORE IN A FEW DAYS TO MAKE ENGLISH CANADA AWARE OF THE PROBLEM THAN COULD BE DONE IN YEARS OF TALKING AND URGING. LEMELIN SPECULATES WHETHER TRUDEAU MIGHT NOT BE SHOOTING THE WORKS, RELYING ON THE FACT THAT ANGLOPHONES ARE WILLING TO GO VERY FAR TO KEEP QUEBEC IN THE CONFEDERATION. BECAUSE, HE SAYS, THAT IS THE PROBLEM. "IF TRUDEAU'S POLICY OF BILINGUALISM FAILS, THERE IS NO PLACE FOR QUEBEC IN CANADA." THE PM HAS BIG PLANS FOR CANADA, AND HE WILL RISK ANYTHING TO MAKE THEM SUCCEED. HE KNOWS THAT HE CANNOT IMPOSE BILINGUALISM ON ANGLOPHONES WITHOUT MAKING THEM FULLY AWARE OF THE NEED. THE ODIIOUS ACTION OF THE PILOTS AND CONTROLLERS GIVES TRUDEAU A HOPED-FOR OCCASION TO SHAKE UP THE COUNTRY. LEMELIN FURTHER SPECULATES THAT, SINCE ALL IMPORTANT POLITICAL MOVES RESULT IN SOME CHANGES, THIS ONE MIGHT BE CALCULATED TO SHAKE UP THE FRENCH POWER MYTH WHICH IS NOW IN AS MUCH DISFAVOR IN QUEBEC AS IN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY AND TO TONE DOWN THE ARGUMENTS OF BOURASSA AND LEVESQUE BY GIVING THE QUEBEC WING OF THE CANADIAN LIBERALS AN APPEARANCE

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OF NATIONALISTIC OPPOSITION. DOESN'T THIS ISSUE ALSO UPSTAGE A MORE IMMEDIATELY SERIOUS CRISIS, THE CONDITION OF THE CANADIAN ECONOMY? LEMELIN CONCLUDES THAT IT SEEMS MORE AND MORE THAT TRUDEAU MAY WANT TO SERVE HISTORY RATHER THAN HIS PARTY IN THE SHORT TERM, EVEN IF THIS MEANS THAT IT MAY SOME DAY BE AN ANGLOPHONE PRIME MINISTER WHO WILL FINALLY PUSH THROUGH BILINGUALISM IN CANADA.

5. THE MONTREAL STAR'S EDITORIAL CRITICIZES BOTH THE QUEBEC AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS AND THOSE FROM OTHER AREAS AS WELL AS THE PILOTS FOR PLAYING WITH THE SAFETY OF THE FLYING PUBLIC AND SAYS THIS MUST NOT BE PERMITTED TO CONTINUE.

6. THE AIR COMMUNICATIONS BILINGUALISM ISSUE DID NOT RATE EDITORIAL COMMENT IN THE MAJOR MONTREAL DAILIES OF JULY 5 BUT LA PRESSE, LA DEVOIR AND LA JOUR ALL GAVE PROMINENT COVERAGE TO QUEBEC PREMIER ROBERT BOURASSA'S SPEECH AT A PROVINCIAL LIBERAL PARTY MEETING IN MATANE, QUEBEC, ON JULY 3 IN WHICH HE IN EFFECT TOLD THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO STAY ON ITS OWN TURF AS FAR AS DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF QUEBEC FRANCOPHONES IS CONCERNED. IN THAT SPEECH, BOURASSA IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT IF OTTAWA IS NOT ABLE TO HAVE CERTAIN BASIC PRINCIPLES RESPECTED, THE CONSTITUTION WOULD HAVE TO BE CHANGED.
HARPER

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